

DCFS Weekly Update From the State Office

Monday, July 9, 2001

One of Our Own--A National Celebrity

By Richard Anderson

Mike Chapman, our Deputy Compact Administrator for the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children, has been elected the president of the Association of Administrators of the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children. The Association is an affiliate of the American Public Human Services Association. Elections were held in May, and Mike is the winner. He is now the top officer in the Association. This position is elected every two years.

Mike does a quality job for our state and now he has been recognized nationally. We appreciate his fine example in our division. He is a real asset to all of us, especially to those of you who work with other states in the placement of children. We, in Utah, already knew he was top notch. Now the nation has found him.

Platinum Celebration!

By Richard Anderson

Southwest Region has reached the pinnacle of our fiscal certification program! They were recognized by the Department and the Division on June 28th for having achieved the Platinum Level Certification in fiscal accountability. This means that in all areas of fiscal planning and application, Southwest Region has shown sound fiscal reasoning and effective monitoring of their budget. This is a first for a region! Our hats off to the administrative staff and field staff of Southwest Region!

Proposed Changes on the Horizon

By Duane Betournay

Within the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS), a sometimes little known but effective program called Youth Services has been providing valuable family and child interventions to families in crisis. Perhaps the most recognizable program, Salt Lake County Youth Services, has been in continuous operation for the last 29 years.

As we approach the 30th year of a model for providing early intervention and prevention services, a debate (a long standing debate) has been taking place, which could result in the movement of Youth Services from DCFS to the Division of Youth Corrections (DYC). But what does this mean? What is the realm of services that constitutes Youth Services and how would the movement of these services either help or hinder the availability and quality of services to families in need? These and several other questions will be answered over the next several months in preparation for legislative action in the beginning of 2002.

What can be said at present is that a decision has been made within the Department of Human Services to propose the statutory movement of Youth Services within the department from DCFS to DYC. The purpose of the movement is to create a more complete continuum of services to youth that extends from early intervention/prevention to secure care and aftercare. As a part of the statutory movement, there

will also be a name change for the Division of Youth Corrections to one more consistent with a full continuum program of services to youth. Again, though, you may ask what are Youth Services?

What traditionally has been known as Youth Services consists of a variety of interventions and programs designed to assist youth and families through crisis. The goals of Youth Services are 1) to protect runaway and homeless youth from exploitation or harm; 2) to keep families intact through intensive in-home, early intervention services; and 3) to divert youth and families from intervention by the Juvenile Justice System. To accomplish these goals, the Youth Services Program provides the following services:

- Crisis counseling;
- Temporary shelter;
- Skills development;
- Information and community referrals;
- Educational supports; and
- Ongoing family supports for 60 days.

Services are provided by contract by Salt Lake County Youth Services (Salt Lake), Wasatch Mental Health (Provo), and Youth Corrections (Ogden). DCFS and DYC jointly provide additional services in Cedar City.

So again, what is clear is that some services that DCFS has been involved with will be changing. How much things will change and what will be the ultimate impact on DYC and DCFS will be detailed in the next few months. What is also clear is that the changes will likely result in more interface and coordination between the two divisions as we share a significant number of youth in common. If you have further questions or concerns about these issues, please feel free to contact me at (801) 538-4341 or by email at dbetourn@hs.state.ut.us

Practice Model Brings Resolution and Solutions

By Richard Anderson

I received a call last week from a long time acquaintance calling because he had recently discovered that I was the new director of our division. After expressing the confidence he had that I would do a good job, he told me of his involvement with our agency about five years ago. I knew that he had gone through a divorce, but I did not know that our division had been involved in a protective service referral during and following his divorce. He had been accused of abuse of his son while on a visit. He said he had called to set up an appointment with me to use his situation to help me in directing needed changes in the division.

As our conversation continued, he told of not being asked about events where his ex-wife had accused him of abuse and of having many things happen in the process where he was not given an opportunity to respond. After I had heard his concerns, I asked if I might tell him of the practice model and how we are enhancing our way of approaching families.

I gave him a brief explanation of the practice model, including small summaries of the engaging training, child and family service teams, functional assessments, services planning, and wrap-around services. After this short overview, he became quite positive and responded that he did not need to meet with me after all. He said that what I had told him satisfied his concerns and that he was hopeful that others in his situation would receive respectful treatment.

We never know how we are going to be judged by many of the people we work with each day. At least my friend seems convinced that we are moving in the right direction. His call turned from one of extreme concern, and a desire to help us improve, to confidence that we are already moving to a better place in our way of working with people. We hope this is what you are seeing happen, too, as you practice the model.

Moving to That Better Place

By Richard Anderson

My previous article is an example of how well the model is received when it is explained to people. This is a good thing, but not enough. We need to know how it really works. I have had several opportunities in the last couple of months to be in situations where the model allows us to have solutions that have not been offered before. In one situation we designed a way to have the child and family team meeting and a transition plan resolve a concern that one of the juvenile court judges had about troubles with case transfers from one region to another. In a couple of other situations, the functional assessments assisted families and the courts to make much more informed decisions on behalf of the children involved. The application of the model promotes the fundamental skills that our professions bring to the child abuse and to the domestic violence service arenas. When the model is applied, and when we are developing our individual skills in the model, there is a pathway provided to meet many of the needs of all entities involved, both individuals and agencies.

The newest module on service planning will be out to all of you soon. We have a plan that will cover the developmental needs of the child and the family, address safety, provide for crises that may arise, and plan for upcoming transitions. The time between the modules is a good time to practice, ask questions, and develop the skills that will make each of us proficient in the practices of the division.

Informed Consent and Release of Liability Form

By Ivy Earl

The Division's "Informed Consent and Release of Liability" form is now available on our web site at <http://www.hsdcs.state.ut.us/PDF/Informed%20Consent.PDF>! This form is to be used when individuals are requesting a child abuse background screening for private adoption purposes. All background screenings must be sent to the State Office in Salt Lake City for processing (the address is printed at the top of the release form). For questions or comments, please call the DCFS State Office at (801) 538-4100.

Tuition Waiver

By Duane Betournay

In the 2001 legislative session, a bill passed enabling State of Utah sponsored educational institutions to waive tuition costs for youth who have been in the State's foster care system. House Bill 64 provides \$48,000.00 to the Division of Child and Family Services to reimburse any State System of Higher Education for the costs of the waiver.

To qualify, a youth must:

- Apply, qualify, and be admitted as a full-time or part-time, or summer school student in a program of study leading to a degree or certificate;
- Be a resident of the State of Utah;
- Apply to the Division for waiver;
- Be in the custody of the Division for not less than 24 months;
- Apply before the age of 22 years;
- Be certified by the financial aid officer at the higher education institution as needing a waiver to meet educational expenses;
- Maintains satisfactory academic progress once admitted;
- Has not either received a Bachelor's Degree or received waivers under this bill for more than 124 semester credits; and
- Attends for no more than nine semesters.

If you have a youth who may be qualified, please provide them with a copy of the tuition waiver introduction letter and the application form (both of these documents are attached to this Update). If you have further questions, contact me at (801) 538-4341 or email to dbetourn@hs.state.ut.us

June 20, 2001

**Youth Leadership and Transitional Living Advisory Council
Tuition Waiver Application**

Name: _____

Address: _____
Street

State

Zip Code

Daytime Phone #: _____

Educational Goals: _____

Personal References:

Name **Relation** **Phone #**

Name **Relation** **Phone #**

Current Grade Level: (Circle One)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Current Grade Point Average: _____

**Return to: Division of Child and Family Services
Duane E. Betournay
120 North 200 West, Room 225
Salt Lake City, UT 84103**

***Please attach an information letter outlining the following:**

June 20, 2001

The Youth Leadership and Transitional Living Advisory Council, in coordination with the Division of Child and Family Services, would like to inform you of the existence of a tuition waiver program. The program allows for tuition waivers at any of the State of Utah sponsored educational institutions. This includes State Universities, Colleges, and Technical schools. The program is available to anyone who has been in foster care for two years or more. The tuition waiver is not a replacement for other grant and scholarship opportunities. In order to qualify, all other methods of support must be explored. In addition, you must be enrolled and accepted into a State Sponsored Educational Institution and have completed an application for financial aid if available.

To apply for a tuition waiver, please complete the attached application form and forward both the form and a letter outlining the following:

- What would the tuition waiver allow you to do?
- Your educational plans for the next two years.
- Your career goals.
- A brief history of your educational experience to date.
- Why you want to further your education.

Include also any letters of support from people who know you and your commitment to further your education.

Mail your application and the information letter to the address below. For consideration of this opportunity, your application must be post-marked no later than July 31, 2001.

Tuition Waiver Program
Attn: Duane E. Betournay
Division of Child and Family Services
120 North 200 West, Room 225
Salt Lake City, Utah 84103